



February 15, 2017

## *GOD AT THE CENTER*

Take a look at the people that gathered into community around Jesus. From Galilee: a few subsistence fishermen from Galilee, that poor region in the north. And from Bethany, down south near influential Jerusalem: the family of Martha, Mary, and Lazarus. It was in Bethany that someone had an expensive bottle of ointment that was used to anoint Jesus just before his arrest. The disciple Matthew the tax collector who had worked on behalf of the Roman empire, while the disciple Simon was a zealot, from the group who wanted to overthrow Roman rule by revolution.

In other words, this community wasn't united by geography or status, and wouldn't have been in agreement about everything. We all belong to groups defined by commonalities, and these groups are often important and good. They bind us to others who share common interests, pursuits, and experiences. But God's community is defined only by the divine presence at its center.

The community that Jesus formed was centered on God. In his book *Searching for Home: Spirituality for Restless Souls*, Craig Barnes described it this way:

*The divine reality is that we are often thrust together with people we don't particularly like and certainly don't resemble. But when that community has a common axis mundi at its center, it not only holds together but also holds heaven to earth. Since it is defined at the center, this community doesn't have to worry about boundary issues and can accommodate all sorts of diversity. That's because it holds together by having clarity about the center.*

We begin each week in worship to become re-oriented to our center. Often, we remember that, "No matter who you are, or where you are on the journey of faith, you are welcome here."

Peace,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Matt". The signature is stylized with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Rev. Dr. Matthew Wooster  
Senior Minister